California Department of Education

California School Recognition Program

2005 Distinguished High School
Application Instructions

What's Included: Instructions for Completing the Application
Application Components:
- Cover Page
- Section I
- Section II
- Section III

Available online at
http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/cs/

Due Dates: *Intention to Submit Application* – Friday, November 12, 2004
Application Postmarked by – Friday, December 10, 2004

Mail to: Karen Heiner, Awards Unit
California School Recognition Program
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4206
Sacramento, CA 95814

Applications
will not be accepted
by e-mail or by fax.

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Deliver to: Security Desk, Lobby
7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
California Department of Education
1430 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Web site: *http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/cs/*

Questions: Awards Unit
916-319-0866

Table of Contents

Intention to Submit Application

The *Intention to Submit Application* notification from schools will enable the California Department of Education (CDE) to validate eligibility, marshal program resources based upon the anticipated number of applications, and screen potential competitors for unresolved legal compliance issues or discrimination complaints. Decisions regarding the eligibility of schools with unresolved compliance or complaint issues will be made by CDE on a case-by-case basis.

The *Intention to Submit Application* is an online submission that is due Friday, November 12, 2004. To access this form, please visit the California School Recognition Program (CSRP) Web site at *http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/cs/.* You may request a *Confirmation of Receipt* to be printed when your submission is complete.

Application Formatting

Downloadable Application

For your convenience, an *Application Fill-In Form* is available on the CSRP Web site. The fill-in form must be downloaded and saved to a directory or desktop before data entry begins. Section I of the form is locked so that the question content, type, size, and spacing may not be altered. The form contains text and numeric fields that appear as small gray boxes for data entry. If you are not able to access the *Application Fill-In Form* at *http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/cs/*, please contact the Awards Unit at (916) 319-0866.

Paper, Spacing, and Fonts

All responses must be printed on standard 8½" by 11" white paper, single spaced, with ¾" margins on right, left, top, and bottom. Use single spacing between lines. All narrative responses in Section II and Section III must be in Times New Roman 12 font. Do not use compressed type. However, the key concepts at the beginning of each theme may be reduced to Times New Roman 8 font. Any deviation from the application format will result in the application being returned.

Space Limitations

Space limitations for the narrative responses will be strictly enforced. In Section II - School Synopsis*,* your school's strengths and accomplishments must be summarized into one page. The primary narrative responses to Section III - School Programs and Processes may not exceed fifteen (15) pages. If space is left on a page after completing your response to one theme, use that space for your response to another theme.

It is acceptable and common to include color graphics, photos, etc., in the narrative. However, if a school adds pages or other attachments beyond those allowed in the application instructions, the additional pages and/or attachments will be removed before the application is evaluated.

Sequence and Pagination

Assemble the application as follows:

Cover page   p. 1

Section I:
Collaborative Preparation of the Application   pp. 2, 2a
Background and Demographic Data   pp. 3, 4, 4a, 5, 6, 6a, 6b, 7
Directions to Your School   p. 8

Section II:
School Synopsis   p. 9 (maximum of one page)

Section III:
School Programs and Processes - Themes 1-7   pp. 10-24 (maximum of 15 pages)

Submitting the Application

Copies

Each school is required to provide eight (8) copies of the entire 2005 Distinguished High School Application (an original printed single-sided and an additional seven copies printed back-to-back). The original and copies must be stapled in the upper left-hand corner and submitted without decorative covers or bindings.

Application Deadline

The 2005 Distinguished High School Application must be postmarked no later than Friday, December 10, 2004. The application will not be accepted by e-mail or by fax.

Mailing or Delivering the Application

We recommend that you send the application package by registered mail, overnight express service, or another method that allows the package to be tracked in the event it goes astray during mailing. The mailing address is listed below:

Karen Heiner, Awards Unit
California School Recognition Program
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 4206
Sacramento, CA 95814

For schools that prefer to hand carry their applications to the CDE, the security desk on the first floor of the Education Building is accessible between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. A special drop-off bin will be designated for applications the week of December 6th. Driving directions and suggestions for parking will be posted on the CSRP Web site at *http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/cs/*.

Screening of Applications

Applications will be screened for completeness by CSRP staff. If covers, attachments, or additional pages of narrative are submitted beyond those specified, the additional pages and/or attachments will be removed before the evaluators read the application.

The CSRP office will not confirm the receipt of your application. However, we will contact you if additional information is needed or if the format is unacceptable. It is extremely important for you to designate a winter break (alternate) contact person and corresponding phone number (different from the school phone number) on the application cover page. As necessary, CDE will resolve problems with applications during winter break and the designated contact person will need to be reachable during this time.

Cover Page

The cover page of the application is primarily designated for current school contact information. The 14-digit county-district-school (CDS) code is the official code by which your school is referenced in all state databases and may be found in the *California Public School Directory.* When you include your school name, list your school as it would be announced to the news media and engraved on your award plaque if your school is selected as a California Distinguished School.

Note that the cover page for the application requires the signatures of the principal and the district superintendent (or an authorized designee). The people signing the document certify that they have reviewed the content of the application and certify that it is complete and accurate.

Section I

Collaborative Preparation of the Application

Information about the development of the school narrative and who participated is required on page 2 of the application and is considered in scoring the application. Principals are expected to invite a team of individuals who represent the entire school community—administrators, teachers, other school staff, students, families, business partners, and community representatives—to participate in the preparation of the application.

If your school is selected as a statewide nominee, you should be prepared to invite a representative sample of the people listed on this page to be interviewed by the site visit review team in order to validate the application.

Background and Demographic Data

This section of the application is designed to provide the evaluator with accurate, up-to-date information about your school and the community it serves. The background and demographic data include geographic location (urban, rural, etc.); master schedule; numbers of classrooms, administrators, teachers, and students; the ethnic composition of your student population and languages spoken; students identified for special education services; student discipline data; and school facilities.

Note that the application directs you to provide information from your most recent California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS) submission, unless there have been significant changes in your student population since it was last reported. In many instances, the scoring rubric specifically refers the application evaluators to this demographic data. This information will provide the application evaluator with a comprehensive context in which to score the narrative description of your school's learning environment and educational programs. A school will not be "penalized" if there are no (or very few) English learners or other special needs students present. Clearly describe your situation for the evaluator so there are no misunderstandings.

Directions to Your School

The application requests that you provide travel directions to your school to be used by the site visit review team members if your school is selected as a statewide nominee. The site visit team will be scheduled by your county office of education and will typically include a combination of county office staff and educators from counties or school districts other than your own.

Section II

School Synopsis

Provide a brief, colorful description of your school that will highlight the main topics in Section III - School Programs and Processes. Summarize your school's strengths and accomplishments, focusing on what makes your school a unique and successful place. Omit testimonials about how much your school deserves the award. The evaluators will not rate this summary, but it will provide them with important background information for understanding your school.

Use the space available for this section wisely, as you would for a news release. Limit your summary to one page and number it page "9." Include the school name centered above your summary as well as the principal's name and telephone number in the upper right-hand corner of the page. Please be sure that there are no typographical mistakes or grammatical errors. If your school is selected for honors, your School Synopsis will be made available to the news media upon request.

Section III

School Programs and Processes Themes

The overall framework of selection criteria for the California School Recognition Program is contained in the scoring rubric. The criteria are organized into the following seven themes:

1. *Vision, Leadership, and Standards*
2. *Student Assessment*
3. *Curriculum and Instructional Practices*
4. *Professional Development*
5. *Curricular Paths and Academic Guidance*
6. *Student Support Services*
7. *School Culture and Engaging the School Community*

Quality Statements

Each page of the scoring rubric presents quality statements that will be used by the evaluators to score the responses for each theme. The quality statements for each theme appear vertically in each column of the scoring rubric. It is critical that as each theme of the application is being addressed, the corresponding quality statements be reviewed carefully.

One reason for low scoring applications is that narrative responses are solely based upon the discussion questions. High scoring applications reflect comprehensive responses based solely upon the quality statements.

Key Concepts

The content of each theme is summarized into key concepts. The key concepts reflect a summary of the critical elements that are addressed in the quality statements for each of the seven themes. While these concepts are not comprehensive, they can serve as a useful tool for you in organizing your responses.

Discussion Questions and Examples

Application discussion questions have been provided to assist you and your school community in developing your narrative response to each of the seven themes of the scoring rubric. The questions consistently prompt writing teams to use school-specific examples and other evidence to support their response. These questions can be found in the Appendix. While these discussion questions closely follow the quality statements for each theme of the scoring rubric, they should only be used as a tool to prompt reflection, research, discussion, and consensus among your writing team. Remember, the focus of your narrative responses must be based upon a thorough discussion of the quality statements in the scoring rubric.

The examples (see Appendix) demonstrate evidence or resources you can incorporate into your responses to provide evaluators with as vivid a picture of your school as possible. Such evidence may include, but is not limited to: statistics and other quantitative data; examples of how a program or activity operates; who does what; who was affected; and anecdotes, quotes, citations, etc.

Attributes of a Strong Response

Section III of the application should accurately describe your school and the community it serves and reflect the school demographics in Section I. All of this information will be subject to validation during a site visit if your school is selected as a statewide nominee.

In order to receive a high score, it is important to make sure that the quality statements for each of the seven themes of the scoring rubric are addressed. For each theme, specific examples and evidence should be included to support your responses. That is, provide a vivid, illustrative example or description for the evaluator in order to communicate a "picture" of what happens at your school, how and why, who is involved, etc. Avoid generalized statements such as "we do that." Restating the language in the rubric or including generalized statements will result in a rating of "two" on the four-point rubric.

Keep in mind that quantitative data always strengthen responses—"Last school year, our volunteer logs documented that over 60,000 hours were volunteered by families and community members. Volunteer activities included x, y, and z" presents far more information than "There is a high level of parent involvement."

Cross-Referencing

The school's writing team will decide how much space to allocate for each of the seven themes within the overall limitation of 15 pages for Section III of the application. In order to make maximum use of limited space, do not repeat the same information for different themes. Because many of the areas of discussion are related and impact each other, we recommend that you cross-reference to conserve space and avoid repetition. However, you should address the theme clearly before referring to additional information in related themes and specify the location of related evidence for the evaluator. Evaluators prefer to spend a minimum amount of time "searching" through an application for evidence not directly contained in a response or reference.

Editing

A competitive application process, by nature, gives preference to a clear and concise writing style. It is strongly recommended that one person with superior writing skills edit the application, with input from representative groups within the school community. There must be schoolwide input, written by a collaborative group, but the final application should speak to the evaluator with a "single voice." The quality of the written presentation influences the evaluators' assessments. Therefore, it is important to designate a competent editor to assist with the final document.

The principal of each school is responsible for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the final document. The principal should personally ensure that: 1) each of the seven themes of the scoring rubric have been fully and accurately addressed; 2) formatting of the application complies with the technical specifications; 3) photocopying has not resulted in missing or non-sequential pages; and 4) shipment of all eight copies occurs according to the application deadline.

Appendix

Discussion Questions and Examples

Theme 1 - Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: Vision, Leadership, and Standards

Discussion Questions:

- How does your school community collaborate to reach a common vision of what students should know and be able to do upon graduation?
- How are teachers, paraprofessionals, parents, community members and others involved in this process?
- How does the school leadership promote the school vision and exhibit a continuing commitment to excellence for all students?
- How is the vision communicated and shared?
- Are California's model curriculum standards in place?
- How does the school community evaluate and student assessment data to revise the school's yearly plan for continuing reform and renewal?
- How does the school plan focus on the achievement of grade level or course standards and is it aligned with the Local Education Agency Plan?
- In addition to the School Accountability Report Card (SARC), how are the results of student assessment data communicated to the community and to parents, including those not fluent in English?

Examples:

Statewide measures include:
- Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) report
- Academic Performance Index (API)
- *Standardized Testing and Reporting* (STAR) system: (*California Standards Tests* and *California Achievement Test, Sixth Edition*)
- *California High School Exit Examination* (CAHSEE)
- *California English Language Development Test* (CELDT)
- *FitnessGram*
- School Accountability Report Card (SARC)
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) most recent report
- ACT, SAT, and Advanced Placement examination results
- Data from standards-based benchmark assessments for district-defined priorities

Theme 2 - Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: Student Assessment

Discussion Questions:

- How does the school use state, district, school, and classroom student assessment information throughout the school year to improve student achievement of proficiency in the California model curriculum standards?
- How does the school monitor, report, and recognize students' progress toward meeting standards, both schoolwide as well as for individual students?
- How do teachers use assessment information, including standards-aligned curriculum-embedded assessments, to plan, modify, and strategically target curriculum and instruction, including homework, to students' needs?
- What examples in English-language arts (ELA) and mathematics illustrate how student achievement data were used to implement specific changes in the school's curriculum, instructional practices, and classroom assessment strategies that contributed to improved student achievement?
- How does the school staff ensure that students know what is expected to produce proficient or advanced work?
- What examples illustrate how students regularly evaluate their own work, reflect on their own progress, and identify their strengths and weaknesses?
- How are school staff involved in interpreting and reporting student assessment results and progress toward achieving standards to parents and the community (including those not proficient in English)?
- How does the school use long-term follow-up data on graduates to improve student preparation for postsecondary education and careers?

Examples:

Assessment methods may include, but should not be limited to:
- Writing samples
- Teacher and student evaluation of student work (rubrics, project scoring guides, portfolios, grades)
- District-developed assessments, criterion-referenced assessments, standards-aligned curriculum-embedded assessments, assessments linked to instructional materials
- Publishers' standardized norm-referenced tests

Appendix *(continued)*

Theme 3 - Academic Excellence: Curriculum and Instructional Practices

Note: This section will be weighted double in the scoring process.

Discussion Questions:

- What are the course requirements for graduation?
- How does the school make sure it provides every student with a comprehensive core curriculum and instruction that is aligned to California model curriculum standards?
- How is curriculum aligned to local and state standards?
- What are examples that illustrate the use of standards-aligned instructional materials and standards-based strategies, especially in ELA and math?
- How are all students provided with a variety of challenging learning experiences that are age appropriate, reflect application of skills and concepts, are personalized for learning styles, and lead to success on the CAHSEE and STAR? What examples illustrate this in ELA and math?
- How does the school make sure the comprehensive core curriculum and instruction is articulated across departments/disciplines at all grade levels and with feeder middle schools and postsecondary institutions?
- How is homework used to support and extend classroom learning?
- Hoes does the school provide access to intellectually challenging career technical education (CTE), with a major emphasis on using high-level ELA, math, science, and problem-solving skills?
- How are service-learning strategies and internships incorporated to enhance the curriculum with real-world experiences and provide connections to the community?
- How does the school ensure that all incoming ninth grade students are placed in approved courses and succeed during their first year?
- Is the senior year an academically rigorous and relevant year for all twelfth grade students?
- How does the master schedule serve all students?
- How is the school community involved in the selection of aligned, standards-based instructional materials, and are all students provided with those materials?
- How do library media resources and services and technology support standards-based classroom instruction and contribute to improved student achievement? Supporting evidence for library media resources and technology include print/media circulation, the number/types of technology tools, frequency of usage, population of users, use of the Internet, etc.
- What is the school's plan for technology use at the school site and the ongoing process of integrating technology into the total school program? What is the extent of an electronic networking infrastructure throughout the site and beyond?
- How does high quality technology support student instruction and the cultivation of technology literacy?

Theme 4 - Academic Excellence: Professional Development

Discussion Questions:

- Does school have long-range, comprehensive plan for professional development? Are teachers and administrators fully included in plan?
- How does professional development prepare all teachers, administrators, and other staff to help students achieve local and state standards through effective standards-based lessons in all curricular areas, particularly in ELA and math?
- How does the school coordinate a variety of funding sources to provide training?
- How does professional development enhance the understanding of student developmental needs?
- How are professional development programs selected and evaluated?
- How does the school incorporate scientifically based research into professional development activities to improve student academic achievement?
- How are staff development and professional collaboration aligned with standards-based instructional materials?
- How is staff professionalism supported and what opportunities are available for staff to collaborate, broaden their knowledge, and participate in decision making?
- How are the California Standards for the Teaching Profession used to design professional development?
- What professional development is provided for other school personnel?
- How are teachers honored and appreciated?
- How are new teachers selected, supported, and monitored?
- What opportunities are available for teachers to articulate with teachers from other grade levels, subjects, and middle school?

Examples:

Professional development activities should reflect awareness of:
- *Aiming High*
- *Designs for Learning*
- The California Standards for the Quality and Effectiveness of Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Programs

Discussion may also include, but is not limited to:
- AB 466 and AB 75 training
- Leadership academies
- Subject matter projects
- Networks and consortia
- Professional organizations
- The Bilingual Teacher Training Program
- Teacher education institutes

Theme 5 - Support for Student Learning: Curricular Paths and Academic Guidance

Discussion Questions:

- How does your school provide comprehensive guidance and counseling support for all students?
- How does the school prepare students upon graduation for postsecondary education, to focus on career technical education, or to enter the workforce directly?
- What resources and opportunities are available for students to prepare their personal learning plans in order to accomplish their post-high school goals, and how changes in students' academic goals are accommodated?
- How are families involved and supported in helping their students make informed decisions about academic options?
- What programs support students from groups traditionally underrepresented in colleges and universities? Programs may include Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), the College Readiness Program (CRP), etc.

Theme 6 - Support for Student Learning: Student Support Services

Discussion Questions:

- How does the school assess and identify students with special needs or who may be at-risk? How does the school take responsibility?
- What programs and strategies do you use to ensure access to and success in the regular curriculum for these students?
- How does the school staff assist students with disabilities to achieve their individualized education plan (IEP) goals, to progress in the regular curriculum, and to be educated with nondisabled students?
- What programs and strategies are used by the school to facilitate the acquisition of both content instruction and English by English learners (ELs), including English language development (ELD)?
- How are extended learning activities used to support students at risk and with special needs?
- How does your school's learning support system provide comprehensive student support services for all students?
- How does the school ensure a safe and secure learning environment and support student health, including programs and partnerships that promote healthy student behaviors and keep the school free from drugs, alcohol, tobacco, crime, and violence?
- How are appropriate student behavior promoted?
- How does the coordination of services support the physical, mental, and social/emotional health of students?

Examples:

Students at risk and with special needs include, but are not limited to:
- Gifted and talented students
- English learners
- Students from culturally and ethnically diverse families
- Transient students
- Students not achieving their identified learning potential
- Students with attendance problems, discipline problems, family-related issues, health-related issues, and nutrition-related issues
- Students with mobility/transfer issues
- Students receiving special education services

Theme 7 - Support for Student Learning: School Culture and Engaging the School Community

Discussion Questions:

- How does the culture of the school support student success in achieving standards?
- How does the school prepare students to be lifelong learners?
- How does the school support all students' social, emotional, and physical growth and development?
- How does the culture of the school promote positive character traits and good citizenship and support non-violent conflict resolution?
- What strategies are used to ensure that students feel a sense of connection to the school?
- How does the school engage families and the community in two-way communication to support student learning and become collaborative partners in the education of their children?
- What opportunities do students have to provide service to their communities and to engage in service-learning experiences?
- How do partnerships with the school support and expand student learning, strengthen the curriculum, and provide opportunities for students to learn about careers and understand the connection between school and careers?
- How does the school's physical environment provide an exemplary learning environment?
- How do district and community resources support a school campus and facilities that are clean and in good repair?

Examples:

Community partnerships may include, but are not limited to:
- Other high and middle schools
- Colleges, universities, and other postsecondary institutions
- Networks, for example: CA Technology Project (CTAP), CA Learning Resources Network (CLRN), CA Statewide Agreements for Resources in Technology (C-SMART), Technology Information Center for Administrative Leadership (TICAL), etc.
- County offices of education
- Community agencies
- Law enforcement
- Service and fraternal organizations
- Associations and clubs
- Businesses and industries
- Labor
- Government agencies
- Faith-based organizations
- Other entities unique to the area